



The Hillingdon Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Volunteer to Career Project The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Evaluation Findings - June 2023

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# Introduction

- The Volunteer to Career (VtC) programme is designed to support volunteers to pursue a career in health and care. Funded by the Burdett Trust for Nursing, Helpforce has worked alongside several NHS Trusts to set up and implement volunteering projects which incorporate career pathways for volunteers.

**The VtC programme has been designed to support organisation improvement across three key strategic components identified as essential to achieving systemic change:**

- **Clinical/Health and Care Leadership** - Developing a network of senior clinical/health and care leaders to harness their expertise to positively influence wider effective engagement, and ultimately adoption of, VtC projects.
- **Environment & Culture** - utilise best practices to raise the value of the volunteer workforce in the health and care environment to enhance the likelihood of volunteers wanting to adopt a career in health and care.
- **Volunteer to Career Pathways** - Develop innovative and impactful volunteer roles and career pathways, linked to local recruitment needs, to encourage/ enable volunteers to use this as a route to a career in the NHS.
- The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust run Admin Volunteers and Meet & Greet Volunteers roles as part of the VtC programme.
- It is important to note the short duration of the VtC programme, **which was only six months**, yet still achieved volunteer outcomes. However, implementing the program for a longer period would have resulted in significantly higher volunteer outcomes.

- The evaluation sought to answer three key questions: what was the impact of the VtC programme on:
  - Corporate behaviours towards volunteering
  - Enabling individual volunteers to progress towards a career in health and care
  - The attitudes of front-line staff towards volunteer services



# Evaluation approach

## Data Collection Mechanisms

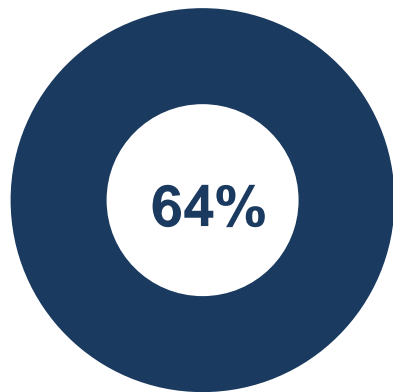
- A **'VtC Self Assessment Tool' (referred to as SAT)** was completed by the project's clinical / health and care lead at the start and then again near the end of their project. The tool measures the organisation against a series of identified categories and questions associated with their volunteering strategy. Also, as part of the SAT, volunteers and staff are invited to complete some additional feedback surveys to provide insight into their perceptions of organisational change.
- **Volunteer surveys** were designed to capture data around the volunteers' level of interest in a health/care career, how they are finding their volunteer role and the VtC programme. The surveys were completed two times; both at the beginning of their volunteering and at a later period. In the Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, **15 volunteers** completed the volunteer survey at the start of their role and at a later date.
- **Staff surveys** were completed at the start and near the end of the VtC project (referred to as pre and post surveys). In the organisation, **15 staff members** completed the pre survey and **16 staff** completed the post survey.



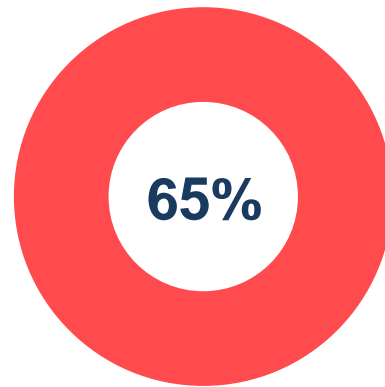
# Evaluation Findings - Organisation

*What is the impact of the Volunteer to Career programme on corporate behaviours towards volunteering?*

First SAT Overall Score

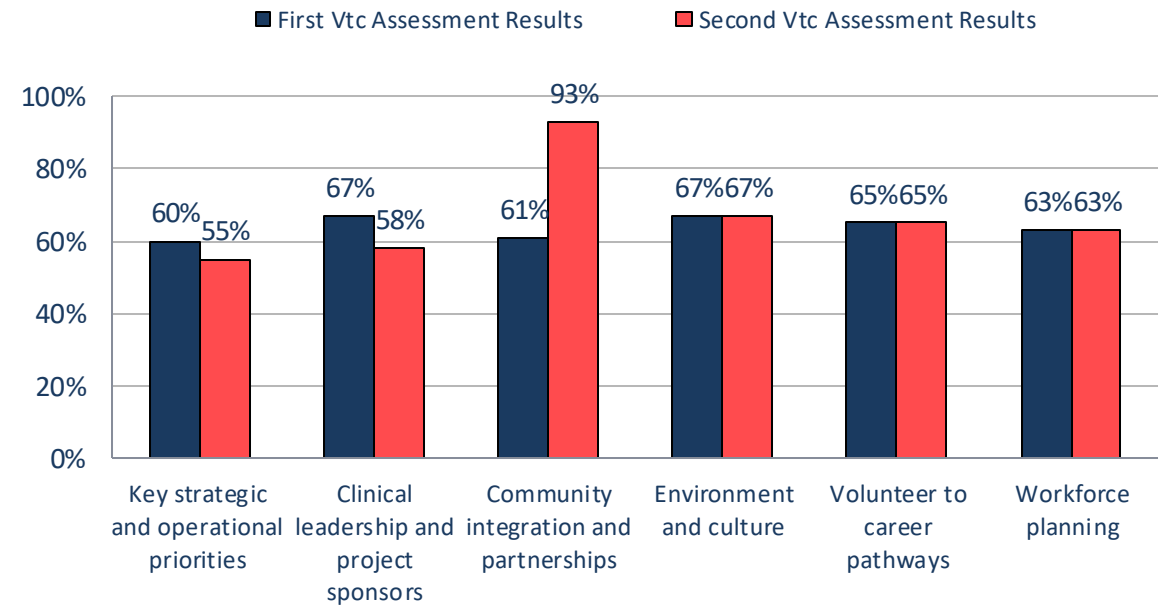


Second SAT Overall Score



- After completing the VtC programme, the Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has shown a **slight increase** in the overall SAT score, improving **from 64% to 65%**. Regarding the six elements of organisational improvement for volunteering, we have observed an improvement in one element, and the organisation maintained its score in three elements before and after the VtC.

First and Second SAT Scores Overview



# Evaluation Findings - Volunteers

  
**7**  
volunteers have taken up employment in the NHS

  
**4**  
volunteers secured further education or training related to health & care

- As part of the VtC programme, four volunteer to career support plans were in place and 19 volunteer to career support sessions were delivered.
- Through the VtC programme and the career support provided, volunteers applied for 53 jobs and attended 23 interviews.
- These applications resulted in seven volunteers securing jobs in the NHS, including roles such as **Patient Access Administrator** and **Healthcare Assistant** and four volunteers securing further education / training courses, including a **Medicine Degree**.



“The VtC programme has given me exposure to different departments in the Trust which helped me understand what services we provide to our patients and how these services are being delivered. I was able to learn about the Trust’s Cares Values which are: Communication, Attitude, Responsibility, Equity and Safety.

Volunteering has allowed me to gain confidence and experience at the workplace as well as improve my English skills. It has helped me overcome my language barrier and gain work experience in the Trust and it has allowed me to get a job in this field.

As a result of the volunteering I did, I was hired by the Overseas Manager as an Overseas Admin (Band 2). The second job I was able to find was at the hospital booking centre as a Patient Access Administrator (Band 3). My current job is as a Digital Analyst at the hospital (Band 5).

I would strongly recommend VtC to other people thinking about volunteering as it has helped me a lot with my career.”

Indiana – VtC volunteer

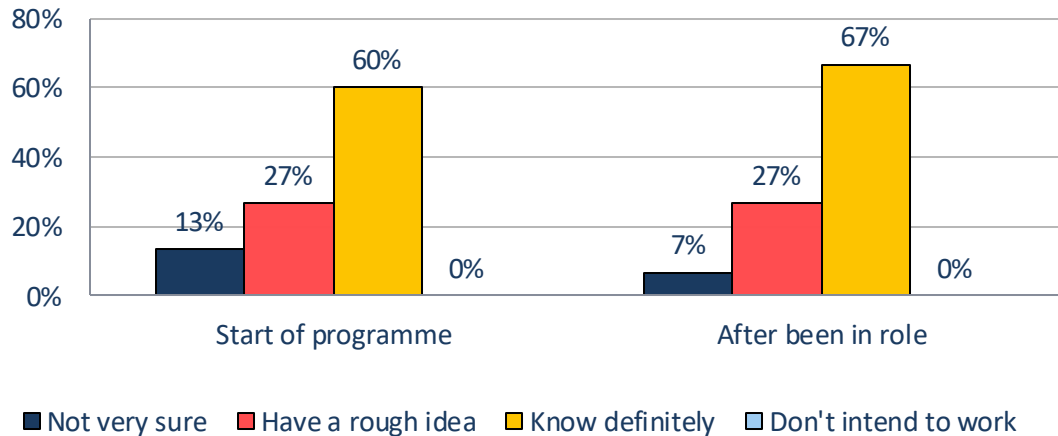


# Evaluation Findings - Volunteers



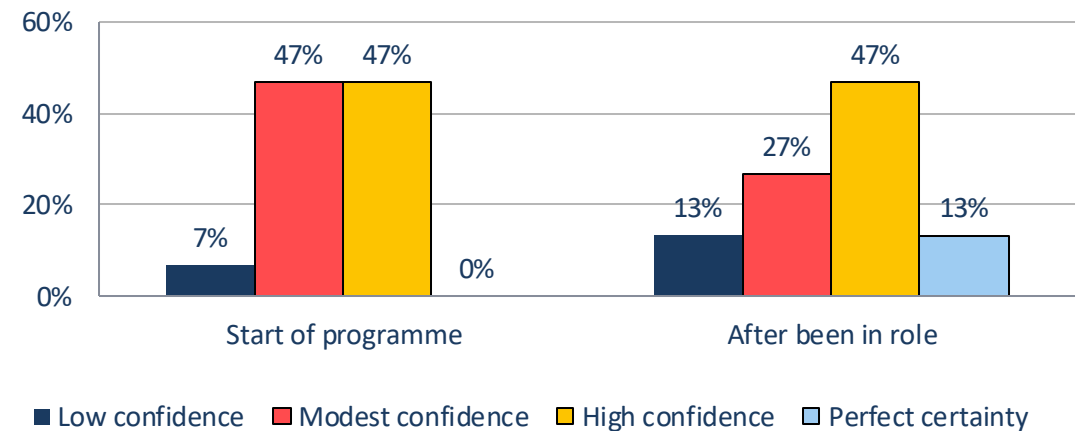
### Ambitions for working life over the next 5 years

*n=15*

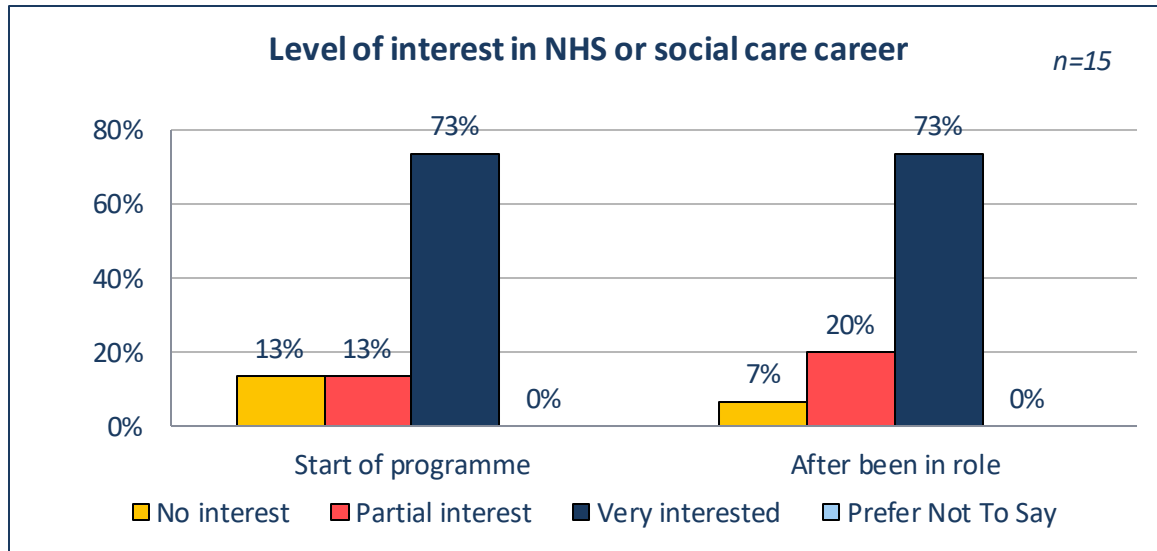


### Confidence in career ambitions

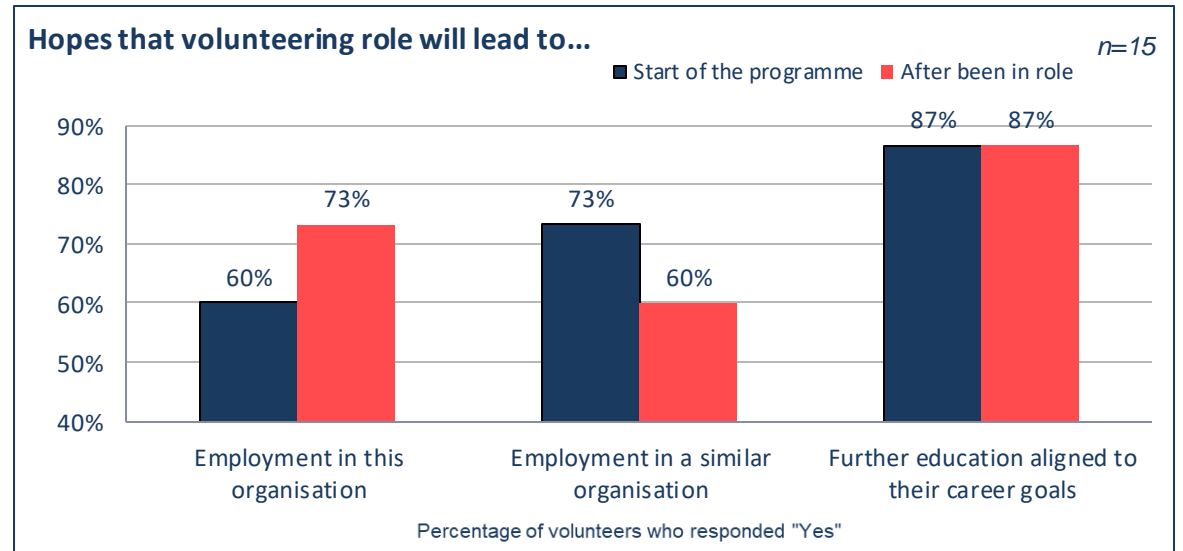
*n=15*



# Evaluation Findings - Volunteers



- Volunteers were also asked about their hopes if they wished their volunteering role would result in certain outcomes related to their careers, future education, and training. Volunteers reported...





# Evaluation Findings - Staff Members

*What is the impact of the Volunteer to Career programme on front line staff members' view of volunteer services?*



"Having volunteers support in our hospital make a real difference to our Dementia patients. The patients feel listened and valued. The volunteers get involved in Dementia friendly activities, such as assisting patients to access the Magic interactive table. There is positive feedback from staff and relatives. The volunteers also support patients known Dementia to complete 'This is me' leaflet, so nursing staff are aware of their personal life and preferences in order to provide high quality care to our patients. The volunteers are always flexible and ready to help if a staff member cannot be present for an event. One volunteer loved working in our hospital, and she successfully took a job as a health care assistant. Networking is a big thing in the healthcare sector, and it helps us a lot to make connections and learn from other people. There is no reason to hide that some volunteers have interest in a salaried position."

Antonia Samargiu - Dementia Clinical Nurse Specialist at The Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust

# Additional staff feedback



**"We currently have some exceptional volunteers that have exceeded my expectations. Going above and beyond to support patients."**

Staff member



**"We have a great bunch of volunteers who are a pleasure to work with."**

Staff member



**"Working with the volunteers two days a week I am able to provide a Dementia friendly activity- Magic table. I won't be able to complete this activity on my own."**

Staff member



**"Having volunteers meeting and greeting patients has been very useful in freeing up receptionists' time to focus on other responsibilities. Support from volunteers contacting patients who have responded to text messages or not attended has helped to reduce the number of PALS queries and complaints received, particularly where the volunteers are able to use PAS."**

Staff member



**"The volunteers are now working with the team regularly and in managed spells which are predictable each week. They have also been very reliable which makes a big difference to the team."**

Staff member



**"Overall, really beneficial service, just wish there were more of them!"**

Staff member



**"I think they are an essential part of our informal workforce, and we need to increase their numbers and expand their brief."**

Staff member

# Considerations and Next Steps

Following the implementation of the VtC programme, the key considerations and next steps have been highlighted below...

- Progress in VtC initiative is constrained without funding;
- VtC demands time to identify opportunities(including training), engage stakeholders, and promote volunteering;
- Absence of resources risks unclear employment paths for volunteers, who need guidance throughout their journey;
- Executives should clarify their goals and strategies for staff retention over the next 3 - 5 years and consider the potential of volunteering as a critical aspect of staff retention;
- Collaboration between recruitment teams and volunteering is vital for achieving staff retention goals.

# helpforce

## Thank you

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